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18 February 1956



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OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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DIA and DOS review(s) completed.

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2. JAPANESE TO PLACE GREATER EMPHASIS ON RELATIONS WITH PEIPING



Japanese diplomacy in the future will place greater emphasis on relations with Communist China, according to a Japanese press report of 14 February. The report asserted that the Japanese Foreign Ministry had concluded that Communist China can no longer be ignored, that there

is no likelihood of an uprising to unseat the regime, and that the Chinese people have the utmost trust and confidence in Mao Tse-tung's government. A ministry official has acknowledged that the story is an accurate version of a ministry "background study" which is not intended as a policy paper.

Meanwhile, another ministry official has informed the American embassy that he believes the Taiwan government cannot exist under its present leadership for more than two years, and that many Japanese officials are convinced some Nationalist leaders are negotiating with the Communists for favorable surrender terms.

Comment

This apparently deliberate leak of proposed Japanese policy on Communist China is strikingly similar to an earlier release of an official paper which unfavorably compared American economic aid policies to those of the USSR.

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**3. SOVIET JET HEAVY BOMBERS SIGHTED AT
LONG RANGE AIR FORCE BASE**

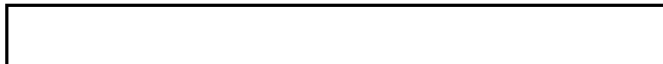
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On 10 February Western air attachés observed five, possibly six, BISON jet heavy bombers on Bykhov airfield near Smolensk. Two BISON or BADGER jet medium bombers with wing-tip tanks were seen on the airfield southwest of Orsha, also in the western USSR.

Comment

This is the first reported observation of jet heavy bombers at airfields on which Long Range Air Force bomber units are based. It is currently estimated that two bomber regiments of the Long Range Air Force are equipped with a total of 38 BISONs and that more than 70 could have been produced by 1 January 1956.

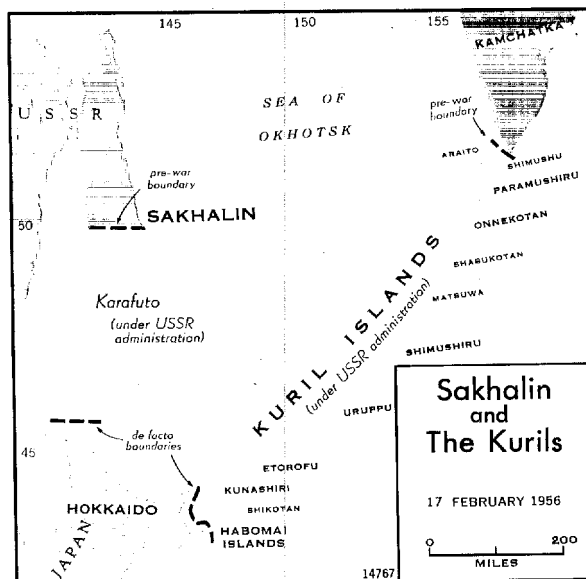


4. SOVIET OFFICIAL IN TOKYO REPORTEDLY HINTS AT POSSIBLE RETURN OF KUNASHIRI

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According to a report passed on to Prime Minister Hatoyama and the Foreign Ministry, Andrei Domnitsky,

chief of the unofficial Soviet mission in Tokyo, has hinted to Japanese fishing interests that the USSR might "under certain circumstances" return Kunashiri, one of the southern Kurils, but not Etorofu, where there is a major Soviet air base. Domnitsky also vaguely linked the status of Etorofu with that of the Ryukyus and Bonin Islands.



The embassy notes that Japanese resistance to a compromise on the territorial issue might collapse in the face of this latest Soviet tactic.

Comment

Soviet negotiator Malik's flat rejection on 10 February of any further discussions of Japanese territorial demands would seem to bar further progress on this issue in the London talks. Domnitsky's reported feeler may be an attempt to suggest to the Japanese that the USSR might be ready to make further territorial concessions if diplomatic relations are established.

Domnitsky's offer, if valid, would have great attraction for the Japanese, since they have previously suggested they would be willing to accept a status for the southern Kurils similar to that under which the Ryukyus and Bonins are administered by the United States.

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6. POLISH CIVIL AIR SERVICE TO BE EXTENDED
TO EGYPT

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According to a Warsaw broadcast of 15 February, an agreement was signed in Cairo recently setting up regular direct air services between Warsaw and Cairo.

Comment

This would be the only Soviet bloc air service to the Middle East and Africa.

Implementation of this agreement would require Polish air rights in Greece. Athens will have no basis for refusing these rights, since Poland and Greece are signatories of the International Air Services Transit Agreement, which grants reciprocal commercial overflight and landing rights for refueling purposes.

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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION
(Information as of 1700, 17 February)

Continuation of a small-scale selective call-up by Israel of reserve personnel and vehicles has been reported for the third successive day by the American military attaché in Tel Aviv. The attaché believes these actions are precautionary against Egyptian troop movements in Sinai. It is also possible that the call-up is part of normal training procedure.

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The American embassy in Damascus has been informed that gasoline distributors in Syria have been warned by the government that the entire output of 64 octane fuel of the country's leading refinery is reserved for the Syrian army for the remainder of February. The sources of this information agree that the purpose of this move is to permit the army to build up its gasoline reserves against a possible outbreak of hostilities.

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The Lebanese foreign minister told the American ambassador in Beirut on 13 February that no Arab government could now support the Johnston plan for the development of the Jordan river valley and remain in office. The foreign minister urged that the United States give more consideration to the "Arab plan," arguing that this might make the difference between war and peace.

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